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## SPECIAL EDITION: November Update

### COVID-19 November Update

As the flu season approaches and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic persists, the necessity for a single test that measures antigens for severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) coronavirus (CoV) (eg, SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2 [COVID-19]) as well as influenza virus types A and B has become apparent.

During the November Current Procedural Terminology (CPT<sup>®</sup>) Editorial Panel (Panel) meeting, the Panel approved an additional code for the Microbiology subsection of the Pathology and Laboratory section of the CPT code set. To address the ongoing clinical need to report COVID-19 testing, the Panel expedited the publication of this additional code to the AMA website on November 10, 2020, at <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/covid-19-2019-novel-coronavirus-resource-center-physicians>. This code is effective immediately for use in reporting this laboratory test.

#### Microbiology

▲87301 Infectious agent antigen detection by immunoassay technique, (eg, enzyme immunoassay [EIA], enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay [ELISA], fluorescence immunoassay [FIA], immunochemiluminometric

assay [IMCA]) qualitative or semiquantitative; adenovirus enteric types 40/41

▲87426 severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (eg, SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2 [COVID-19])

#●87428 severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (eg, SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2 [COVID-19]) and influenza virus types A and B

#### Background

Currently, there are two existing CPT codes to report antigen testing using immunoassay technique for influenza type A or B (87400) and SARS-CoV-2 (87426). However, there is no code that describes multiplex immunoassay antigen testing for these three viral targets, ie, SARS-CoV, SARS-CoV-2 [COVID-19], and influenza virus types A and B. A code to report a multiplex viral pathogen panel using an antigen immunoassay technique would facilitate reporting SARS-CoV-2 testing, along with influenza types A and B in the differential diagnosis.

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Analogous codes have been adopted for multiplex viral pathogen panels using molecular methods for detecting nucleic acids (eg, 87636, *Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]) and influenza virus types A and B, multiplex amplified probe technique*; 87637, *Infectious agent detection by nucleic acid (DNA or RNA); severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Coronavirus disease [COVID-19]), influenza virus types A and B, and respiratory syncytial virus, multiplex amplified probe technique*).

The following clinical example and procedural description reflect a typical clinical situation for which this new code would be appropriately reported. Because of the early deployment and utilization of these tests, clinical indications are subject to further refinement as knowledge of the novel coronavirus

evolves. The Panel will continue to review and may clarify these indications as more information becomes available.

## Clinical Example (87428)

A 50-year-old female presents with fever, cough, and shortness of breath. A nasopharyngeal swab is collected for SARS CoV-2, influenza A, and influenza B antigen testing.

## Description of Procedure (87428)

Place the swab and swirl it in a supplied reagent tube to disrupt and release viral nucleoprotein antigens; transfer an aliquot of that sample to the test cassette sample well; and place it in the analyzer. Report the qualitative results to the ordering health care professional.

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The *CPT Assistant* Special Edition information is designed to provide accurate, up-to-date coding information. We continue to make every reasonable effort to ensure the accuracy of the material presented. However, this publication does not replace the CPT codebook; it serves only as a guide.

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